

Message Text

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62

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT GR

SUBJECT: CONTROVERSY OVER TV BROADCAST

1. NATIONWIDE TELEVISION AUDIENCE ON OCT 28 SAW A ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSION ON CHANNEL 11 (EIRT -- THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RADIO AND TELEVISION) IN COMMEMORATION OF OHI DAY. THE PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED SUCH KNOWN COMMUNISTS AS MANOLIS GLEZOS AND SPYROS LINARDATOS, AND FELLOW-TRAVELERS, ALTOGETHER TOTALLING FIVE. THE CONTENT OF THEIR DISCUSSION HAS AROUSED A STORM OF PROTEST IN THE CONSERVATIVE PRESS AND COMPELLED THE GOG TO ISSUE A STATEMENT BY UNDERSECRETARY TO PM (FOR PRESS AND INFORMATION) LAMBRAIS CALLING FOR AN INQUIRY INTO THE MATTER.

2. THE PROGRAM INCLUDED AN ATTACK ON THEN DICTATOR METAXAS AS HAVING SAID "NO" TO THE ITALIANS NOT TO SAVE THE NATION BUT HIS OWN DICTATORIAL REGIME; PORTRAYAL OF THE COMMUNISTS AS SUPER-PATRIOTS OF THE TIMES FIGHTING AGAINST FASCISM, AND THE PLAYING OF THE EAM-ELAS ANTHEMS. OCT 29 AND 30 PRESS GIVES FRONT PAGE PLAY TO BROADCAST, CONDEMNING OR PRAISING ALONG PARTY LINES.

3. LAMBRIAS ATTENDED MEETING OF EIRT BOARD, ACCORDING TO GOG STATEMENT, AND REPORTED THAT 'LARGE SECTION OF VIEWERS WAS DISMAYED BY THE ATTEMPT IN THE BROADCAST OF CELEBRATION OF OCT 28 ANNIVER-
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SARY AS DISTORTING RECENT GREEK HISTORY.' BOARD THEN INSTRUCTED

EIRT DIRECTOR GENERAL

VLACHOS TO HOLD AN INQUIRY AND PUNISH THOSE RESPONSIBLE.

4. COMMENT: CONTROVERSIAL BROADCAST BRINGS TO SURFACE LONG SIM-MERING PUBLIC DISSATISFACTION WITH EIRT PROGRAMS WHICH HAVE BEEN CRITICIZED IN PRESS AND BY PUBLIC FOR BEING INFERIOR TO RIVAL ARMED FORCES NETWORK AND FOR PRONOUNCED LEFT-WING SLANT IN NEWS AND COMMENTARY. DEPUTY DIRECTOR SOLOMOS, WHO HAS ENCOURAGED USE OF USIS MATERIALS, IS QUOTED TODAY AS SAYING HIS HANDS HAVE BEEN TIED SINCE LAST JUNE, THAT HE DISAPPROVES OF EIRT PROGRAMS BUT THAT HE REFUSES TO RESIGN. NEVERTHELESS, HEADS ARE EXPECTED TO ROLL AT EIRT AS CRITICISM OF NETWORK'S EDITORIAL POLICIES CONTINUES TO MOUNT. NOT ENTIRELY UNVULNERABLE IS LAMBRIAS HIMSELF WHO HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL MEDIA. IN ANY CASE THE INCIDENT REFLECTS THE INEPTITUDE OR MISJUDGMENT OF THE NATIONAL MOOD ON PART OF THE OFFICE OF PRESS AND INFORMATION SINCE THE PROGRAM WAS TAPED SEVERAL DAYS EARLIER AND ITS CONTENT KNOWN IN ADVANCE.
KUBISCH

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